

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Regents

From: Board Office

Subject: Annual Governance Report on Academic Program Reviews
and Student Outcomes Assessment

Date: August 30, 2001

Recommended Actions:

1. Receive the report.
2. Encourage the universities to focus academic program reviews more on program improvements based on existing resources and to describe more fully the changes made in programs that directly relate to student outcomes assessment measures.

Executive Summary:

Annually, the Board of Regents receives several reports on the quality assurance efforts of the Regent universities. These efforts include regional and professional accreditation reports, post-audit reports, special reports, program reviews, and student outcomes assessment reports.

This report provides summary information on 36 program reviews, including their student outcomes assessments, undertaken in 1999-2000. This compares to reviews of 31 programs in 1998-1999. These quality assurance efforts represent the implementation of Key Result Area (KRA) 1.0.0.0 of the Board of Regents' Strategic Plan, to become the best public enterprise in the United States. Specifically, this report addresses Objective 1.1.0.0, which is to improve the quality of existing programs.

A list of the 36 program reviews is found in Attachment A, pages 27-28.

During Academic Year 1999-2000, the University of Iowa completed 12 reviews, Iowa State University completed 7 and the University of Northern Iowa reported the results of 17 reviews. According to Board policy, each year the universities should review between one-seventh and one-fifth of the academic programs. That did not occur at Iowa State University in 1998-1999 or 1999-2000, due in part to administrative changes at the institution. Attachment B, pages 29-34, contains the seven-year cycle of proposed reviews at the three universities. Iowa State University is projected to increase its annual reviews.

This is the fourth year that Student Outcomes Assessments (SOAs) are an integral part of the academic program reviews. The final two sections of the 36 reviews contain numerous examples of curriculum changes that have been made as a result of student evaluations and, in other cases, alumni and instructor surveys. Some reviews contain data on performance of students on licensure and professional examinations.

For the most part, the 1999-2000 reviews have addressed several concerns of the Board Office the past several years. Too frequently, past reviews were resource-oriented (e.g., information about adding new faculty, obtaining new technological equipment, building new or remodeling facilities). In other words, the main focus was on new resources, not program improvements. Although most reviews attempted to focus on what could be done with existing faculty and the same facilities, the reviews often projected some of the consequences of reduced budgets and scaled back targets and projects from strategic plans.

Another concern raised the past two years related to the use of a single outside reviewer. Nationally, those who have analyzed the use of outside reviewers recommend that two or three persons be used to give better balance and additional perspectives. This reporting year, the universities secured a number of external reviewers from distinguished programs.

Background:

Academic program review and professional accreditation reports are two complementary aspects of the Board's quality assurance efforts. An academic program review is based on assessment of a program's strengths and weaknesses, and typically results in modifications of curriculum and personnel changes (adding or reducing faculty or staff). Academic program reviews should go beyond minimum standards and assess the desired level of quality at the institution. A professional accreditation report is based on a unit's compliance with minimum standards set by a professional organization.

The Regents' *Procedural Guide* provides that "reports are to be made on an annual basis to provide the Board with more frequent exposure to institutional efforts to improve academic program quality and effectiveness." The Board of Regents' strategic plan calls for each academic program to be assessed at least

once every seven years (Action Step 1.1.1.3 and Action Step 1.1.2.1). Academic program reviews are essentially reviews undertaken to improve curriculum and student learning, and these reviews are intended to focus on what can be done with existing personnel and resources. The *Procedural Guide* indicates that accreditation reports should be separated from program reviews, although it recognizes that accreditation reports are supplementary to the program reviews. Evidence from a review, i.e., the self-study with necessary modifications, is also used in an accreditation.

While some variations exist at the three universities -- each university includes a copy of its review process in its report -- the typical academic program review consists of these major steps:

- The review begins with the program or department performing a comprehensive self-study that should identify the strengths and weaknesses of a program based on university guidelines and is prepared by the unit's faculty.
- Usually, a panel of external peers from the field or discipline reviews the self-study and makes a campus visit. In several of the current reviews, only one external reviewer was used. More typically, two or three outside reviewers are used in comprehensive program reviews. The external reviewers prepare a report of the findings and recommendations for consideration by the appropriate university entity.
- The dean(s) and Provost review all documents, meet with the program faculty, and along with the faculty, create an implementation plan for the program that builds on strengths, corrects weaknesses, and establishes strategic goals and objectives for the program.

A goal of the new reporting process is to have the academic program reviews feature more clearly changes that have been implemented. In so far as it is possible, the individual departmental or program reviews should also include evidence of improvements of teaching and especially student learning. Board policy requires that Student Outcomes Assessment (SOA) material be highlighted in the reports.

The inclusion of SOA material and the linkage with changes in curriculum varied greatly. Some units provided numbered or bulleted lists of assessment instruments. Some departments referred to a national test that students take, without reporting on the scores of students or how they compared with students from peer institutions on the same examination. Other reviews provided extensive narratives of a range of instruments, from course evaluations to alumni surveys to faculty interviews. Generally speaking, the SOA coverage was much better this year.

The remainder of this memorandum provides highlights from each of the university reports, with brief sketches from each departmental/unit review.

Copies of each university's report are found in the Regent Exhibit Book.

The University of Iowa

In 1999-2000, SUI completed the academic program reviews cited below. A brief description of each program, focusing on selected actions taken as a result of the findings and recommendations, is provided.

College of Dentistry –

Department of Pedodontics. The Department reported that it is in a transition, with the addition of junior faculty replacing a senior long-term faculty. The new faculty members have “state-of-the-art” clinical skills, especially surgical and experience doing implants. The pre-doctoral teaching program has been extensively reorganized. Faculty members have been successful in securing external research funding from industry and government sources.

Student Outcomes Assessment: As reported last year, College of Dentistry students consistently score above the national average on the Periodontics component of Part II of the National Board examination. This report did not describe how specific student outcome assessments impacted curricular changes.

Department of Prosthodontics. The completion of the simulation clinic and development of a new pre-doctoral curriculum, which includes the integrated pre-clinical prosthodontics with other components of restorative dentistry, requires changes in course material and organization. As a result of the review, the department's pre-clinical courses have undergone extensive revision. The report noted another change – the characteristics of the patient pool. Patients tend to have more complex dental treatment needs, but have less funding available to pay for treatment. Another comment in the report was the national trend of declining enrollments in this field among United States dental school graduates. The College of Dentistry, in collaboration with the University of Iowa Health Centers, has secured funding for stipends for residents that will make the College more competitive in attracting applicants for post-doctoral programs.

Student Outcomes Assessment. This report did not include specific examples of changes that related to findings from the SOAs.

Department of Preventive and Community Dentistry. Among findings and recommendations from the reviews are:

- Give consideration to formalizing clinical prevention within treatment plans for all dentate patients;
- Some tenure-track faculty have roles more suited to the clinical track; and
- The relationship of the department to the College of Public Health has yet to be defined.

One action implemented is that clinical prevention has been incorporated into the treatment planning instruction at the College level. Another action is that the department executive officer (DEO) has been appointed to an advisory committee of the College of Public Health. That appointment will help in the development of the relationship between the department and College.

Student Outcomes Assessment: Last year it was reported that College of Dentistry students had scored above the national average on the Behavioral Science and Dental Public Health components of Part II of the National Board examination. No new data were reported this year.

College of Engineering –

Department of Biomedical Engineering. The greatest challenge facing the department is the need to identify focused research areas. Two areas suggested to focus the research better are: (1) biomechanics and tissue engineering and (2) medical imaging. In terms of actions proposed and implemented, the department reported that there have been significant improvements in faculty-student interactions throughout the four-year program. Also, there is more interaction between upper-level and lower-level students through seminars and design projects. For the graduate program, the department is providing more opportunities for students to improve communication skills along with more effective career guidance and placement assistance is being provided. During Academic Year 2000-2001, four dedicated undergraduate teaching laboratories in Bioimaging, Biomechanics, Biomaterials and Tissue Engineering, and Biological Measurements and Systems will be established, giving students more opportunities for experiential learning. A new curriculum for Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering (BME) students was approved in June, 2000.

Student Outcomes Assessment. Throughout the report, the department cites student responses to various programs and reactions to changes in faculty. The report added, however, that no SOA data were available for the reporting year. The College of Engineering is in the process of implementing a new assessment process related to criteria of the Accreditation Board for Engineering & Technology (ABET).

Graduate College –

Molecular Biology Interdisciplinary Graduate Program (MBP). The MBP is designed to provide approximately 25 students with broad training in the area of molecular biology with the opportunity to participate in stimulating research. The program is clearly related to the College's and University's strategic plans – to facilitate interdisciplinary interaction in teaching, research, and service. The rationale for MBP is not just for molecular techniques; it gives students the opportunity to rotate through different labs associated with the basic sciences and medical sciences. Actions taken during the review year include a new Program retreat, a regular seminar series, and several joint projects with other bioscience departments/programs. Also, the Graduate College and the College of Medicine are funding a three-year pilot program on joint recruiting for the biosciences, with a goal of increasing the quality and number of applicants who enroll in SUI bioscience programs.

Student Outcomes Assessment. A spreadsheet attached to the report indicates that 11 of 16 graduates of the Program are now in postdoctoral research associate or fellow positions. One graduate is a resident in an internal medicine program and the remaining four have obtained research scientist or research associate positions.

Neuroscience Interdisciplinary Graduate Program (NSP). This program has approximately 20 students of high quality (as measured by GRE scores) served by a “core” faculty of 54 voting members and 21 affiliated faculty from various departments. The NSP offers a comprehensive curriculum of formal study in molecular, cellular, systems, developmental, and behavioral neuroscience subject areas. It emphasizes original, independent student research conducted in laboratories of Program faculty. Seven courses form the core of the Program: Medical Neuroscience, Fundamental Neuroscience, Developmental Neuroscience, Neurophysiology, Behavioral Neuroscience, Neuroscience Seminar, and Ethics and Responsible Conduct in Research. Like the previous graduate program discussed, this program has initiated a program retreat, a seminar series, and several joint projects. Among findings of the review were that more active participation of a small “core” faculty is necessary for program cohesiveness. The reviewers concluded the program needs to improve communication, both among participants and with related bioscience departments.

Student Outcomes Assessment. An attached spreadsheet produced employment data on 16 students who had completed Ph.D. degrees -- four are in tenure-track faculty positions, one in medical administration, one in industry, three are medical residents, and six are postdoctoral research associates/fellows. The report noted student enthusiasm about the program, but did not provide specific examples of the “translation” of findings from the SOAs to changes in curriculum and teaching practices.

Project on the Rhetoric of Inquiry (POROI). Historically, POROI received grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and other sources that supported the Iowa Scholars Workshop and the Iowa Teachers Workshop. These projects, in turn, resulted in many books, articles, and innovations in curricula as well as strategies for instruction. More recently, a POROI priority has supported international intellectual exchanges by using the World Wide Web. The new interdisciplinary graduate certificate program in Rhetorics of Inquiry is enabling POROI to share experiences from its many programs more effectively with candidates from the arts, humanities, and social sciences. Based on the review, changes implemented or proposed for implementation include:

- Moving to the Jefferson Building (July 2001);
- Restructuring a staff position (completed);
- Broadening faculty participation and increasing interaction between faculty and students; and
- Continuing Graduate College support for the POROI-sponsored course, Writing for Learned Journals.

Student Outcomes Assessment. A student survey in 1997 resulted in high ratings of 11 of 13 questions. The strengths of the Program were identified as the accessibility of the faculty, the positive relationship of the Program Director to the students, and the belief that the Program would be helpful to students seeking employment. A list of certificate graduates and their departmental affiliations was provided with the report.

College of Liberal Arts –

School of Art and Art History. The School is central to the mission of the College of Liberal Arts. Its programs are of high quality, particularly in studio art. The demand for the undergraduate major has been rising steadily over the past 10 years (from 550 to 750). Ongoing assessment of the undergraduate major has resulted in several modifications of the BA/BFA curriculum in art. The dossiers of art studio majors applying for admission to the BFA program are more stringently reviewed. Courses in basic drawing and basic design are being revised. Coursework in digital art has been expanded. Students seeking licensure in art education are now required to develop an electronic portfolio. The role of technical support staff in the studios has been strengthened. SOA feedback contributed to restructuring of the Introduction to the History of Art course.

Student Outcomes Assessment. The undergraduate major is assessed through exit interviews with graduating seniors, through successful exhibitions of student work, and acceptance of students into the strongest graduate programs in the country. Among data on job placement, the report noted that more than 80% of those seeking licensure in art education had found

permanent teaching positions during the three-year period of 1997-2000. In exit interviews of art history graduates, more than half had secured jobs in arts and related field (e.g., museums). The School's fine arts graduate program (MA/MFA) is ranked tenth in the nation overall by *U.S. News & World Report*. The printmaking area is ranked first in the nation.

School of Library and Information Science. In 1998, the School revised the curriculum for the MA program to integrate information science more thoroughly into the curriculum. As a result, the School was able to expand its distance learning offerings through the ICN. The School was transferred from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences to the Graduate College in July 2000, which had been a recommendation from the review .

Student Outcomes Assessment. Public, academic, school, and special libraries in Iowa and adjoining states depend on the School for trained staff. Of the 347 graduates from 1992-98, the School had placement data on 298 (86%). Of these, 114 placements were in academic libraries, 83 in public libraries, 52 in school libraries, and 49 in special libraries or information service environments. The report did not detail specific changes related to SOA feedback.

Museum of Natural History and Museum Studies Program (joint review). The Museum, located in Macbride Hall, with additional exhibits in cases in the basement hallway, is used for outreach to state elementary and high schools and to support university instruction in the sciences and science education. The Museum Studies Program is a group of courses rather than a degree program. The Museum Director, staff members, and adjunct faculty teach the courses. The review committee recommended that the administration of the Museum be separated from that of the academic Museum Studies Program. Also, the committee recommended that steps be taken to secure and improve the curation of the collections and to update the display areas of the Museum.

Further, the committee suggested the appointment of two advisory committees. In November 1999, the Steering Committee for the Museum of Natural History was charged with overseeing Museum operations. Since then, an interim director has been appointed, and she has obtained external funding for three projects that will improve the quality of the Museum's collections and its management processes. Discussions are currently underway for administrative transfer of the Museum to the Office of the Vice President for Student Services. The Museum Studies Program Advisory Committee was charged with exploring curricular and co-curricular resources for an interdisciplinary certificate program in Museum Studies with affiliated faculty and staff. For financial reasons, the plan has not been implemented.

Student Outcomes Assessment. There is no major, minor, or certificate program in Museum Studies, which is a group of courses of interest to students in many majors.

College of Medicine –

Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. The Department, which accepts five physician residents each year for a four-year training program, teaches two groups of learners. One group are graduating medical students; consistently, they are highly qualified students from schools throughout the nation. The second group are third-year medical students who are taking a six-week clerkship in obstetrics and gynecology. The reviewers concluded that the department is balanced in its activities. They offered several recommendations, including: (1) greater faculty oversight of the residency program; (2) pursuit of additional community affiliations to expand educational opportunities; (3) expeditious planning for a new Women's Health Center; and (4) diversification of the department's funding base to assure future fiscal stability. The actions that have been taken include: (1) further structuring of the management of the residency program, (2) increased interaction with the UIHC to inform the Iowa community about new women's health services and facilities, (3) greater support of junior faculty career development and funding, and (4) additional exploration of educational opportunities for residents and medical students.

Student Outcomes Assessment. Students give the department high marks for its commitment to teaching and the organization of learning services. Their principal concern is the low number of obstetrical deliveries. An alternate rotation has been established at the Broadlawns Medical Center in Des Moines to address this concern.

Department of Surgery. The department offers a full spectrum of clinical surgical services. Since its last review, the department has received a designation as a Level I Trauma Center. It now has funded a named professorship. The review resulted in the following recommendations: (1) granting the Division of Neurosurgery separate departmental status; (2) enhancing the academic mission of the Emergency Treatment Center, including the establishment of a residency-training program; and (3) supporting the search for new leadership in the Thoracic and Cardiovascular Division. The department also points out that the research activities of faculty and staff, with some individual exceptions, could be strengthened. The Department Head, in consultation with the faculty, is developing a new faculty practice plan. The specific recommendations are nearly implemented. The Division of Neurosurgery was approved by the Board for departmental status. The search for a Department Head was nearing completion (as of July 2001), as was the search for a new Chair of the Thoracic and Cardiovascular Division. The Emergency Medicine section

became an autonomous academic unit as of January 1, 2001. The search for a Program Director for that unit is currently underway. The plans for the establishment of a residency training program are in process.

Student Outcomes Assessment. The department trains approximately five to six resident physicians in General Surgery for five years each, and two residents per year for five years in Neurosurgery. The Cardiothoracic Division is approved for two residents per year for a three-year training program. The medical students in the clerkship program take written examinations. Residents are evaluated by faculty through observations and written in-service training examinations.

Iowa State University

The ISU report begins with the University's policy on academic program review. On page 6, the report underscores the important relationship of such reviews to strategic planning. "Program review is a process by which the future directions, needs, and priorities of academic programs can be identified. As such, program review is inextricably linked to strategic planning, resource allocation, and other decision-making at the program, department, college, and university levels." It is notable that each program begins with a "profile" of the graduates of its programs. This helps focus the student outcomes assessment as to the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions that are sought.

College of Family & Consumer Sciences –

Hotel, Restaurant and Institution Management – The undergraduate program is the only four-year degree program of its kind in Iowa. It prepares graduates for management positions in the hospitality industry. The graduate program enjoys distinction as one of the few graduate programs in HRIM in the nation. With several new faculty and a new department chair, HRIM has been experiencing a renewal the past few years, including increasing numbers of students. The primary learning laboratory for the program, the Tearoom, needs to be renovated.

The external review team highlighted numerous strengths of both the undergraduate and graduate programs. The team encouraged faculty members to continue to explore opportunities for experiential learning, a minor in business, and exploration of what electives to offer. The team also raised concern about the Tearoom being "woefully outdated." Final recommendations included reevaluation of the program mission, establishment of an industry advisory board, and establishment of an alumni network. HRIM has made a number of changes since the review, including:

- a service learning component added to the Principles of Hospitality Management course;

- revised program mission statement;
- a new five-year strategic plan;
- a proposal for an independent Ph.D. program; and
- a merger with two other departments (Family and Consumer Sciences Education and Textiles and Clothing).

Student Outcomes Assessment. During each course, a variety of techniques are used for student evaluations, including group projects, examinations, oral presentations, and written assignments. Students complete course evaluations. Graduating seniors are asked to complete a written questionnaire to provide their assessment of the quality of preparation on a variety of indicators. The DEO also holds exit interviews. One year after graduation, students and their supervisors are asked to provide ratings on the quality of preparation and relevancy of hospitality-related concepts. Faculty members meet with industry recruiters each semester to obtain their feedback. Generally speaking, student assessments (and those of supervisors) indicate the students are well-prepared and the quality of education good. Examples of curriculum changes made in light of the assessments include: increased attention to lodging operations, computer applications, and stronger hospitality accounting skills.

The placement of graduates continues to be nearly 100%.

Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs –

Neuroscience Program. The program at ISU was approved in 1990. It began with 32 faculty and 12 students the first year. Since then, eight Masters degrees and 17 Ph.D. degrees have been awarded in Neuroscience. The program is an integral part of the strategic plan for the BMS Department in the College of Veterinary Medicine. The review team's recommendations included the following: more attention should be directed to student recruitment, the graduate curriculum, student assessment, and increased investment. For example, the curriculum could be strengthened by increasing the introductory neuroscience sequence from one semester to two, improving the number and diversity of upper level course offerings, and adding a bioethics course. In response, the report noted that three new elective courses have been approved. In regard to the first semester course in neuroscience, a more advanced text is being considered. Also, graduate students are required to attend additional discussion sessions. The development of a second semester course for Neuro 556 is currently under consideration.

Student Outcomes Assessment. The Program has implemented an annual review and evaluation of all graduate students within the Program. Faculty mentors are encouraged to meet with their graduate students to discuss their evaluations. All of the graduates since 1990, have been placed in

postdoctoral positions, permanent jobs, or have gone on for further education. A number of the graduates have now been placed in university/college research and teaching positions.

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences –

Foreign Languages and Literatures Department. After noting some faculty additions, such as two FTEs in Chinese which will greatly support the development of a curriculum in Chinese Studies, the report lists a number of other changes impacting teaching and learning. For example, the department has inaugurated new test-out and placement test materials and methods of electronic delivery. The department has designed a self-paced, intensive remedial unit of first semester language study that will utilize only one instructor per language. That strategy allows a greater concentration of teachers in the second semester. Another strategic goal for 2001-2005 is to incorporate into as many courses as possible the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning. The external review team found the quality of the department “to be high, well distributed, and overall impressive in the area of scholarship.” Cooperation with other units on campus was viewed as very positive. Since Spring 2000, several faculty have been added (two in Russian, one in Afro-Hispanic Studies, one in Professional Communication). There has been greater coordination within and across first- and second-year language courses. A detailed strategic plan is also included with the review.

Student Outcomes Assessment. Department faculty members have begun discussions about certifying the language proficiency of students, an element in its strategic plan. One option is to offer ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview certification. That would require a professional to conduct interviews with majors in each modern language offered by ISU (French, German, Russian, Spanish). No data are provided on students’ performance or evaluation of curriculum.

Greenlee School of Journalism & Communication. Undergraduate enrollment in the Greenlee School has increased by 103 students, or 14%, since the fall of 1997. The Board approved an undergraduate degree in Communication Studies in the summer of 2000. There are 100 students majoring in this area at present.

The external review team’s general recommendation was to use their report as an “iterative process” to discuss changes in program directions. That occurred and ten specific recommendations were made. The report, in great detail, indicates what action has been taken relative to each one. One, for example, related to more closely aligning the curriculum for journalism and the electronic media to respond to the technologies of media. Another included dividing the curriculum into three areas: public communication, commercial communication, and technology communication.

Student Outcomes Assessment. Consistent with the 12 standards for program assessment of the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC), the School uses three major activities: a comprehensive self-study, a site visit by peer evaluators, and an accrediting council report. The standard relating to student learning and the curriculum (Standard 3) involves the following assessment tools: review of course syllabi, classroom visits, course assignments, student interviews, interviews with media professionals familiar with student accomplishments, and completed student projects. Another means of student assessment is professional internships. During 2000, students in the Greenlee School completed 151 internships for academic credit. Graduating students are also surveyed via e-mail questionnaires regarding the advising process, suggestions for improvements to the School, and the educational process. Examples of changes made as a result of student input include: development of an undergraduate advising center, use of temporary teaching funds to support a television production specialist for cable television programming, and increased support for student reporters and editors working at the *ISU Daily*.

History Department. History is a cornerstone of the humanities and of the liberal arts tradition in education. The first goal of ISU's strategic plan includes imparting to students "knowledge of the intellectual, historic, and artistic foundations of our culture." An aspect of this goal is to help students gain "multicultural and international awareness and appreciation." Toward these goals, the department teaches 250 undergraduate majors and approximately 2,000 other undergraduate students. It offers doctoral programs in the history of technology and science and agricultural history and rural studies.

The department rejected some suggestions of the external reviewers, including adding a general supervisor of graduate education (another layer of administration) and reducing graduate student time in presenting papers at professional meetings. It is implementing some of the changes, but many are related to increased funding. It is attempting to develop a more effective program for training its teaching assistants, to do more collaborative teaching, and to support teacher education for secondary schools.

Student Outcomes Assessment. Faculty members are asked to judge how well their majors met expectation in relation to the standards proposed by major professional associations. Recently, the high ratings given by faculty to majors, has been supplemented with a written exercise required of all history majors. All majors write two term papers in conjunction with an upper-level (400-level) class. Beginning last year, the department decided to apply national history standards to the evaluation of History 495 term papers. The assessment is in its early stages, so a final evaluation is yet to be made.

Music Department. The department was pleased with the report of the review team that emphasized the strength and extraordinary commitment of the faculty. The review team recommended that the music and theatre programs should eventually be separate units. The team did raise a concern that there be a more comprehensive orientation program for students in the performing arts degree program. A curriculum committee is evaluating that concern. The departmental faculty also agree with the team's conclusion that fundamental infrastructure issues need to be addressed (library, equipment repair, theatre instructional space and storage).

As a result of the review, changes were made in assessment procedures for both music and theatre students. Programmatically, additional funding has been found to make greater use of technology in the department, such as student computer labs. Some curriculum changes, particularly in the required dance courses, will be proposed in the Bachelor of Arts in the Performing Arts degree. The faculty has reaffirmed its commitment to service and outreach.

Student Outcomes Assessment. The public nature of the disciplines of Music and Theatre make outcomes assessment "natural." Four primary tools measure attainment of students majoring in Music:

- a continuation examination (mid-point in program);
- survey of music majors since 1992;
- exit interviews of graduating majors by DEO; and
- Public performances by students.

Political Science Department. At the time of the review, there were 232 undergraduate majors and 26 graduate students in the department. In its final report, the external review team made a number of supportive statements about the faculty, undergraduate program and graduate program. It also offered recommendations. In the areas of governance, the department held a strategic planning meeting led by a professional facilitator. At that session, it approved its 2000-2005 Strategic Plan.

In the area of strengthening the graduate programs, several actions have been taken. It now encourages MA candidates to take both Political Analysis (Pol S 502) and Political Research (Pol S 503), not just one of the two, plus Statistics 401 or the equivalent of three years of a foreign language. The Department will also increase the minimum Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) score for international students from 540 to "normally 570." Working closely with the College of Education, the department will recruit social science teachers seeking licenses, and develop a joint BA-MA program in Political Science at ISU. The Chair has contacted four Iowa colleges (Central, Grinnell, Loras, and Luther) and invited the Departments of Political Science at these colleges to nominate one or more graduating

students for ISU's MA or MPA program. The MPA Program Committee has begun the process of restructuring the curriculum by giving a sharper focus on the areas of concentration, namely public management, policy analysis, and international administration. In response to another recommendation by the external review team, the Department has recruited two practitioners as adjunct faculty, one, formerly from the State Attorney General's office and another, the City Manager of Des Moines.

For the undergraduate program, the department has already implemented several course changes. It is making greater use of research projects and a research practicum.

Student Outcomes Assessment. Over the years, the department has developed several outcomes assessment reports. In light of the review, greater attention is being paid to evaluation of students' writing abilities. A survey of 1997 graduating seniors reinforced the need to emphasize writing and analytical skills of students. The respondents to the senior survey believe they have a good understanding of other cultures and a good ability to describe ideas, but tended to rank their career preparation, the degree of confidence in their academic abilities, and their problem solving skills lower than other graduating seniors at ISU. Coupled with the decline in majors and enrollments at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, the department is reviewing its entire curriculum.

University of Northern Iowa

The Academic Year 1999-2000 was the ninth year for Academic Program Reviews at UNI. In 1996-1997, UNI began to integrate the results of Student Outcome Assessments with the program reviews. This year, the results of the reviews by the University Program Review Committee and the Provost's Office are much improved over previous years. The Detailed Procedures for Academic Program Review at UNI is found at the end of the report.

The academic program reviews for UNI completed in 1999-2000 include:

College of Business Administration --

Management Major. Since the last program review the number of declared and pre-management majors has dropped 17 percent. The major has three "emphasis" areas: Business Administration (BA), Human Resources Management (HRM), and Supply Chain and Operations Management (SCOM). The BA continues to be the most popular emphasis by far, the SCOM the least popular. Last year, the Regents approved a curriculum revision that changed the Production and Operations Management emphasis into the Supply Chain and Operations Management emphasis. In time, SCOM may increase in popularity, as the transition is completed.

As a result of the review and outcomes assessments, the department has done such things as:

- Have discussions whether the BA emphasis should be more focused;
- The use of adjunct professors;
- Improved communications skills (a result of a new faculty hire); and
- Improved relations with external constituencies.

Student Outcomes Assessment. At the program level, a questionnaire is administered in the upper division Management courses at the end of each semester. Faculty members discuss the results and make appropriate changes. For the HRM and SCOM programs, results are also analyzed by faculty and discussed with representatives of companies who employ program graduates. At the course level, students complete questionnaires relating to particular competencies and objectives throughout the semester. Results of such questionnaires had been used to make changes. For example, students believed the core Operations course was deficient in terms of data analysis techniques and interpretations. Students with a BA emphasis identified that they felt deficient in communication skills, ability to work in groups, and in understanding of the realities of the business world.

Management Information Systems (MIS). Since the last program review, the number of declared majors and pre-majors has increased 212 percent. The number of faculty members teaching in this area has not kept pace with the growth of students. That has resulted in one key issue, not being able to create an MIS minor. The program is now at a point where it maintains high quality of instruction consistent with the University's and College's strategic plans.

The external reviewers recommended that the MIS area might consider becoming a department, or that MIS should become the central focus of the entire management department. The faculty rejected both proposals. The MIS program continues to maintain close ties to the Computer Science Department in the College of Natural Sciences. They will continue to share many extracurricular activities, including sponsorship of guest speakers and receptions with potential employers.

Student Outcomes Assessment. Students report that they are very satisfied with their knowledge of Information System Technology and with Information Systems Concepts and Processes, as well as MIS management. Some adjustments have been made to address concerns about the use of CASE tools, systems testing, and the legal implications of MIS.

Management/Business Teaching. Student interest in teaching business has waned considerably from the peak years of the 1950s and 1960s. In Fall

1999, there were 12 undergraduate declared Business Teaching majors. In the Spring 2000 semester just 11. The number of pre- and declared majors has declined 62.2% since the last review. The Department of Management and the College of Education are discussing the future of the program. In sum, the reviewers and faculty agree that the program is in transition.

Student Outcomes Assessment. The system of assessment instruments is similar to those previously described for this program. The Business Teaching majors appear to be satisfied with the program and believe they have gained the competencies needed. They have raised concerns about the following, however: 1) the development of classroom management skills, 2) over-emphasis on multi-media skills, and 3) inability to comprehend the entire set of business core courses, i.e., the need for operations management and financial analysis. The College of Education faculty has responded to the first two concerns. It is difficult to amend the program without violating American Association of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) accreditation standards. One way this is being handled now is with the joint appointment of a College of Education faculty member.

College of Education –

Elementary Education. Currently more than 1,900 students have declared elementary education as a major. It is the largest undergraduate major in the University. Forty-five graduate students are enrolled in the graduate program. The addition of new tenure-track faculty has not kept pace with enrollment, and, thus, a large number of classes are taught by non-regular faculty members, three of whom are full-time temporary instructors, and the rest of whom are part-time adjuncts. While the review notes that the staffing problem is significant, it maintains that other aspects of the program have retained their high quality. Consistent with the College of Education's strategic plan, faculty members in the Division of Elementary Education receive grants that promote intellectual vitality and diversity, as well as apply cutting edge research. Another faculty member has a staff development project for Chilean educators, reflecting the University's strategic goal of becoming involved as a participant in an international community. The external reviewers saw as examples of the Division's quality, such activities as collaborative learning, experiential learning projects, and successful integration of performance-based assessments into courses.

Some of the action steps taken or contemplated are:

- Continue the transition to a performance-based and standards-based curriculum;
- Provide more electives;
- Institute an enrollment management plan if more faculty members cannot be added;
- Hold a retreat for faculty; and

- Increase the ICN program and consider development of a M.A. degree in Curriculum and Instruction.

Student Outcomes Assessment. The Division is currently revising its curriculum to meet state-mandated performance-based standards. This corresponds to similar requirements by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), which UNI plans to rejoin. As part of that effort, elementary education faculty have been making significant revisions to its SOAs. This year, for the first time the Division conducted an on-line survey of students who had graduated from the Master's degree programs in the last ten years. Items on the survey were based on National Board of Professional Teaching standards. Survey response rates were low. Those who responded were very positive about the program. Only one indicator, computer technology, was rated as less than satisfactory. More experience with computers is now included in the curriculum. The Elementary Education Division is working with the rest of the department to recreate its undergraduate program assessment, based on portfolios developed by students.

Early Childhood Education (ECE). Enrollment at both the undergraduate and graduate levels has remained constant since the last review. In the reporting year (1999), there were 513 undergraduates and 24 graduate students. Early Childhood Education curriculum revision has been its major event to coincide with new state certification requirements. A significant change was the addition of course content and experiences for the inclusion of children with special needs in regular classroom settings, i.e., "mainstreaming." The revised curriculum has become known as the Unified Early Childhood Education Program. The Early Childhood Education Division, like others in the department, is currently revising its curriculum to meet performance-based standards.

The program's self-study and external reviewers both noted a need for better articulation with community colleges. More and more ECE students are transferring from community colleges to UNI. The department head is in the process of arranging a conference with instructors at college colleges, so that both can become more aware of each other's programs. One of the areas needing attention is how to better cover supervision responsibilities, particularly in light of the new requirements for performance-based and standards-based assessments. The external reviewers also recommended that there be team-teaching with faculty in Special Education.

Student Outcomes Assessment. The same reasons as described with Elementary Education prompt revisions in SOAs in the early childhood area. In addition, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) sets standards for professional early childhood educators. This year the Division conducted an on-line survey of students who had graduated from the Master's Degree program in the last 10 years. The survey response rate was low. Generally speaking, respondents felt only "somewhat" to "adequately" prepared. The Division is working with the rest of the department to develop a portfolio evaluation system.

Middle Level Education (MLE). Enrollment in the Middle Level Education program has increased nearly five-fold from its inception to the reporting date, i.e., from 42 students in 1992 to 196 in 1999-2000. Since one faculty member teaches the majority of the required classes, staffing is a critical issue. The external reviewers concluded that the program still functions at a high quality level. Like other teacher education programs, the transition to a performance-based framework has resulted in significant revisions in the curriculum and in SOAs.

The self-study recommended reconsidering current content-area requirements in the major, to be consistent with NMSA and NCATE standards. Department faculty and the College of Education faculty have unanimously approved the proposal to do so. The University Curriculum Committee will review the proposal in Academic Year 2001-2002. Another recommendation was to add a second faculty member. In light of budget constraints, the department is considering an enrollment management plan. A department-wide Advisory Committee was established this year; the committee includes a middle level education representative.

Student Outcomes Assessment. Like other units in the department, the response rate of graduates to an on-line survey was low. The items on the MLE survey of Master's degree graduates of the last seven years were based on National Middle School Association (NMSA) standards. A portfolio system is being developed.

Reading and Language Arts. Reading instruction has been a part of the Elementary Education undergraduate major since the inception of the program in 1876. A Minor in Reading was developed in the 1960s, in response to federal Title I legislation. At the time of the review, there were 50 graduate students in the program. At the undergraduate level, the reading component of the Elementary Education major has three required courses. For the 1,900 declared majors in Elementary Education, an average of 630 students are enrolled in these classes each semester. Of the 350 students who declare a Reading minor, an average of 100 students enroll in the three classes each semester. Eight tenured and tenure-track faculty and eight part-time faculty teach the courses.

Nationally and in the state, school systems have increased their demands for reading instruction in elementary schools. Staffing is a problem, considering the increased demand. To help remedy the need for more educators, a UNI faculty member is co-director of a federal grant called TEAMS, which recruits and supports non-native speakers of English residing in Iowa for teacher education programs. Another faculty member has had a full-time assignment as co-director of the Orava Projects and Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking Project for the past seven years. These programs are consistent with the strategic plans of the College and University.

The self-study recommended that the graduate programs be made more widely available through distance education (ICN and web-based instruction), within available resources. Several course modifications are also being made at the undergraduate level, as a result of the self-study. The most significant recommendation to be acted on is that there be a significant reduction to the curriculum. The highlights of the proposal, unanimously accepted by both the department faculty and College of Education Senate, are as follows:

- Reduce the number of undergraduate minors from three to one, while still making provision for the earning of all state endorsements;
- Raise the required grade point average (GPA) for entry into the undergraduate minor to 3.00;
- Decrease the total number of undergraduate courses, combining the content of several courses into one; and
- Reduce the number of graduate programs from three to one, while still making provisions for the earning of all state endorsements.

The faculty has acted upon several other recommendations. They relate to developing an enrollment management plan (since it appears that the number of faculty hires has been reduced), to make graduate programs more distinct from undergraduate programs, and do more recruiting for the graduate programs.

Student Outcomes Assessment. This unit has also been developing a new performance-based assessment system. Course objectives are being revised, with consideration given to the standards of the International Reading Association (IRA). The responses of Master's degree graduates to an on-line survey were extremely positive. Only one indicator, degree of knowledge regarding federal reading programs (Title I), was rated as less than satisfactory. More information on that topic will be provided in the Roles of the Reading Specialist course. The faculty is developing a portfolio assessment system.

Education of the Gifted. Between 20 and 30 students are enrolled in the program. The program has been taught through distance education via the ICN and computer-assisted instruction for the past several years. It remains

the only Master's degree program in gifted education in the state. The program coordinator resigned as of the end of the 2001 summer session. The future of the program is under discussion now. The external reviewers suggest that at least one faculty member should be hired or that the program be put on hiatus until that can be accomplished. The faculty will spend Fall Semester 2001 discussing future directions.

Student Outcomes Assessment. Students entering the program in 1999 were given the option to create and present an exit portfolio based on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Instructions for developing the portfolio are to be provided via ICN. An on-line survey of program graduates was developed based on gifted education best practices, the Association for the Gifted standards, and the National Board standards. The response rate was sufficient to have confidence in the results. Respondents believed they were either well prepared or very well prepared to be gifted education teachers in all but one area – the use of educational technology. Interviews with graduates uncovered several curricular weaknesses: infant and toddler curriculum, inclusion for children with special needs, and more ICN courses.

Special Education (Undergraduate Program). The Department of Special Education engages in the delivery of professional preparation of teachers planning to work with children, youth, and adults with disabilities utilizing a non-categorical model. In 1998, a new program of study was approved by the Board of Regents to bring the special education teaching minors in line with best practices in the field, that is, a non-categorical approach rather than a categorical approach. The minors included Behavior Disorders, K-6; Learning Disabilities, K-6; Mental Disabilities: Mild/Moderate, K-6; Behavior Disorders, 7-12; Learning Disabilities, 7-12; Mental Disabilities: Mid/Moderate, 7-12. Its program, which had 96 students in the reporting year, exceeds the standards required by the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners for teacher licensure. Because of changes in state laws, some students from other states do not always meet Iowa standards. Therefore, UNI argues that it is imperative to maintain a program that reflects best practices. As noted earlier, the State of Iowa has moved to require that teacher preparation programs be performance-based. That trend continues to impact the special education programs, as it does the other areas of concentration.

The recommendations of the external review and self-study have been or are being implemented as follows:

- Greater use of technology (e.g., websites);
- Review of Council for Exceptional Children standards;
- Consideration to increase minimum GPA requirements beyond the minimum required by the University Teacher Education minimum;
- Curricular changes in the MD:MSP program;

- Increased analysis of the employment status of students who minor in special education, or who complete the Unified Endorsement in ECE;
- Continue collaborative efforts with Curriculum & Instruction faculty; and
- Expand sites for practicums.

Student Outcomes Assessment. Each special education pre-service professional must demonstrate competencies in: 1) diagnosing and analyzing behavior and learning problems, 2) prescribing appropriate programs of instruction and positive behavior supports, 3) implementing these programs in inclusive settings, and 4) evaluating instruction relative to the pupil's progress toward prescribed educational objectives. The report is quite lengthy on student background and evaluation procedures. It asserts that the graduates of the program are highly sought after, in and out of state.

Special Education (Graduate). One of the goals of the University's strategic plan is to prepare highly-informed professionals. UNI also promotes service to the community. The graduate program in special education meets those objectives.

Student Outcomes Assessment. In contrast to the performance-based emphasis of the undergraduate program, the graduate program allows more flexibility. Programs are tailored to the interests and needs of students. In addition to successful completion of course work, students are required to complete a thesis, have an oral examination by committee members, or submit an approved research paper, and successfully complete written comprehensive exams. Since the program has only been in place two years, no general data are available on student performance or placement.

The report details a number of steps being taken to monitor its development.

College of Humanities and Fine Arts –

Communications Studies. At the time of the review, there were approximately 300 student majors in the Division, plus a range of 31 to 71 minors. The number of graduate students on assistantship numbered 10 to 20. The Division provides many courses for students in other programs. The report provides ten pages of discussion regarding the recommendations and actions taken. They clustered around general themes of departmental resources and facilities, departmental governance process, and faculty morale/collegiality. One significant change is that faculty and programs from four facilities spread across campus moved into a single facility in the newly remodeled Lang Hall. A new department head was hired. Many of the recommendations and actions taken focus on administrative and governance issues. The few recommendations that relate to student learning touch on

such topics as grade inflation, making curriculum revisions to reduce redundancy, improving the advising system, and enrollment management.

Student Outcomes Assessment. Each student in the major begins to develop a portfolio during the course of his or her studies. It contains samples of the student's best academic work and is to be completed during the senior seminar class. Other ways in which assessments of programs are made include the yearly alumni newsletter and the Division website. Despite the long report, little is included on student evaluation of the program or placement of students.

Electronic Media. Due to the heavy demand for courses, the Division has developed a wait-list system that prioritizes students so that those majoring in division coursework have the opportunity to complete their programs of study. For the most part, other University students are excluded from enrolling in electronic media courses. Virtually the same points are made here as in the previous program description. The recommendations focus on administrative clarifications, governance issues, and enrollment procedures and limitations. The division head describes the development of a Council of Coordinators that is "to improve information flow and decision-making quality among the divisions, to provide a body for discussion of issues that affect all divisions, and to provide a check on potential negative efforts from decentralizing authority for some problem-solving out of the Department Head's office."

Recommendation #7 does speak to the "antiquated technology" that requires replacement, an especially important part of the Electronic Media program.

Student Outcomes Assessment. See Communication Studies, page 21.

Mass Media. This division's purpose is not clearly stated, nor is much concrete information provided about the careers its graduates prepare to enter. Toward the end of the report, under a recommendation, the number of students in the Journalism minor is said to be rising. Some discussion has been given to making this a major. There is general agreement of the faculty regarding another recommendation, to seek Council for Education in Public Relations (CEPR) accreditation for the Public Relations program. Another recommendation stated that the advising system is to be monitored and improved.

Student Outcomes Assessment. The report indicates that in one of the two first courses students take, Principles of Public Relations, students begin to develop a professional portfolio. The portfolio is to be completed during the course, Public Relations: Cases and Studies, taken the semester before graduation. In the Cases and Studies class, students also complete a student outcomes assessment questionnaire. It is reported that students from the past three years have indicated high satisfaction with the curriculum.

Theatre. The undergraduate program enrollment remains consistent (123), according to the report. The Department of Theatre expects to increase its recruitment efforts, but does not want to do so at the expense of quality of the program. The program offers vibrant theatrical productions, outreach programs (UNIFY, Sturgis Youth Theatre, Drama Day), as well as a number of guest artist programs, and involvement in national festivals and events. Graduates of the M.A. program, while small, have continued their graduation education pursuing Master of Fine Arts or Ph.D. degrees at Yale University, the University of Illinois, the University of Iowa, University of Minnesota, the University of Texas, and other excellent theatrical institutions. The low enrollment does concern the faculty. As a result of the program review, the faculty came to a consensus that with commitment, resources, and a marketing plan, the program can become an integral option of students seeking the M.A. degree. The plan to continue the graduation program does include some changes, such as adjusting the curriculum to include additional experiential learning opportunities.

In the Fall of 2000, the Curriculum Committee of the department identified the need to cut hours from the program as well as contact hours from classes. The new curriculum is aligned with the department's mission statement and embraces the liberal arts philosophy of the College. The department also implemented changes in 2000 to strengthen its advising system. Several other recommendations have been acted on, including support for collaborations with a variety of other theatrical and non-theatrical groups.

Student Outcomes Assessment. The report contains clearly stated benchmarks and a variety of procedures for evaluating students. They range from examinations to guest artist reviews, alumni surveys, use of portfolios, and exit interviews. The program uses "Post Performance Discussions" to determine audience reactions and reactions to production goals and intent.

College of Natural Sciences –

Computer Science. This past year the program made major revisions in its curriculum. Specific changes were made in the introductory level courses and several new courses were added. The program review noted an increase in international academic opportunities. For example, a cooperative Master's degree with ENASI, the National Higher Education Institute of Statistics and Information, in Bruze, France has begun.

The findings, recommendations, and actions taken section is well-done. A number of detailed suggestions are provided for both the undergraduate and graduate programs, both from the self-study and from external reviewers. Many do relate to budget items, but there are some relating to better teaching and advising.

Student Outcomes Assessment. The program reports it uses declaration surveys (i.e., intentions and directions), exit surveys, a senior sequence (writing oral presentations, and teamwork skills), alumni surveys, and PAT or Program Assessment Tool, a custom-written software program to assess computer science knowledge.

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences –

History – Undergraduate. At the time of the review (Fall 1999), there were 227 students with declared majors in the two undergraduate history programs – History (teaching) and History (liberal arts). In 1999-2000, there were 25 full-time faculty holding tenured or tenure-track lines in history. The emphasis by UNI upon undergraduate education is reflected in the large number of history courses and General Education courses offered, as well as its efforts in preparing 50-60 students per year for licensure in the teaching of history. Two major curriculum changes occurred in the mid-1990s. First, two required lower-division European history classes were deleted from the major and, in their place, two upper-level European electives were substituted. Second, a junior/senior seminary requirement was instituted. Another major change in the history (teaching) curriculum was the strengthening of the required teaching methods course, “The Teaching of Social Studies.”

In response to the external reviewers, the faculty developed a report that called for the following:

- The junior/senior seminar should be required of all history majors (the department agrees);
- The history club should be revised (agreed to, new co-advisers appointed);
- New awards should be created to recognize the distinguished academic performance of teaching and liberal arts majors (two awards were created);
- Addressing faculty payment issues;
- Enhancement of public history offerings; and
- Alumni sponsorship of career workshops for undergraduate majors.

Student Outcomes Assessment. The faculty administer narrative response questionnaires to samples of declared undergraduate history majors near the beginning and then near the end of their programs of study. Another form of evaluation is to have a group of faculty annually evaluate the writing of samples of “historical thinking.” The report documents changes made as a result of these assessments.

History – Graduate. At the time of the review, there were 10 students in the Master’s degree program. The mission statement, which is part of UNI’s strategic plan, stipulates that the University should offer “selected masters . . . programs that provide students with specialized educational experiences.”

This is one such program. The enrollment in the program has been higher, but the decline may be due in part to the decision to require a thesis. The department is considering two recommendations: (1) reinstalling the non-thesis option, especially for secondary school teachers, and (2) adding a public history option, for individuals interested in graduate training for careers in museums, archives or historical societies. The external reviewers made other recommendations that have already been incorporated into the curriculum. For example, the department has assigned the Graduate Coordinator to determine research tasks for the graduate assistants.

Student Outcomes Assessment. Assessment is very similar to Bachelor degree requirements. At the graduate level, students are required to do complex thinking.

Analysis:


The academic program review process is a well-established practice that assists the universities and the Board of Regents in meeting objectives of their strategic plans. This on-going process continues to result in strengthening programs through curriculum revisions and budget reallocations, as well as offering creative ways (such as merging departments or programs) to redirect less strong programs.

Generally speaking, the academic program reviews this year were more focused than those of last year. Using the new format, the reviews more clearly presented a picture of current conditions, along with recommendations that emerged from the self-studies and external reviewers. Most important, the reports described the action steps implemented and the recommendations that were not accepted.

The relationship of the department's or unit's strategic plans to the college's and university's strategic plans was described in a number of the reports. Next year, such treatment should be continued, but the Board Office recommends that it be more specific, e.g., use more lists, with less prose. Considering the budget constraints placed on the universities, it is understandable that the reviews detailed the implications of reduced resources, especially faculty shortages and facility deficiencies. However, university staff guiding the review process should remind persons preparing reports to emphasize again what can be done to improve teaching and learning, assuming no changes in budget or staff.


Charles R. Kniker

Approved: _____


Robert J. Barak